



## **Hampshire- Franklin Commission on the Status of Women and Girls**



### **Annual Report June 2017**

#### **Commissioners**

Denise Brown (Northampton)

Ginetta Candelario (Northampton)

Linda-Jeanne Mack (Easthampton)

Bonnie MacCracken (Amherst)

Keleigh Pereira (Turners Falls)

Marcia Plant Jackson (Leverett)

Chelsea Sunday Kline (Northampton)

Francia Wisnewski (Montague)

Anais Surkin (Appointed, sworn in pending) (Greenfield)

#### **The following were nominated and elected as temporary officers:**

Francia Wisnewski ~ Chair

Denise Brown ~ Vice Chair

Linda-Jeanne Mack ~ Clerk

Bonnie MacCracken ~ Treasurer



## **Hampshire- Franklin Commission on the Status of Women and Girls**

**April**

**April 25th, 2017**

**Sworn in ceremony at South Hadley Public Library**

Decisions made:

Francia Wisnewski was appointed as the acting commission chair.

Denise Brown was appointed as the acting commission vice chair.

Linda-Jeanne Mack was appointed as the acting commission clerk.

Bonnie MacCracken was appointed as the acting treasurer.

As this was the first meeting of the commission, it was decided to elect members as acting positions versus permanent positions. The Commission decided that these positions would be temporary and would be officially voted on after the Commission had met for official meetings.

It was decided that bylaws for the commission would be decided at the first regularly scheduled meeting.

**May**

**May 18 th, 2017**

**Hosted our first meeting at the Bangs Community Center – Amherst, MA May 18<sup>th</sup>  
from 6-8pm**

Discussion regarding other commission best practices on meeting planning. Decision was made to set meetings in advance for the year. Ginetta Candelario led an exercise for each commissioner to suggest goals, ideas or potential accomplishments for the first year. Suggestions included:

- a resource guide for girl-centered programs,
- expanding statewide leadership, support and empowerment
- a website and Facebook page
- LIPPI awareness
- knowledge about the commission
- running public policy groups



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- conducting studies (like intercept mapping or conducting focus groups)
- engaging constituents in reference to the needs of women and girls
- connect with other commissions to learn best practices and build capacity
- community breakfast (like Berkshire County commission)
- joint meeting with commissioners in Hampden County on a regular basis (3-4 times per year?)
- engaging Latino/a community
- data gathering
- applying for funding together with other commissions, not to compete but to collaborate
- branding
  - o creating logo
  - o banner
  - o business cards
  - o name tags
- outreach and visibility
  - o participate in Pride
  - o other community events
- inviting women from the community to be present
- being careful that we're not speaking for people
- engaging young girls
- youth leadership programs
- a girls advisory board
- keeping area strong for girls
- ensuring that women and girls of color in the community are involved
  - o what are their needs
  - o Denise Brown has potential plans she'd like to propose in the future to help advance this cause

A mission statement needs to be decided that goes with the mission statement of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

A retreat will be scheduled to help solidify who will have what roles and responsibilities and to complete bylaws.

Dates were scheduled for the coming months and each commissioner was assigned a meeting date to be responsible for. The meetings will rotate between Hampshire and Franklin counties bi-monthly.

Chelsea created a Google calendar of the events.



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Meeting dates: 6/26/17, 7/24/17, 9/25/17, 10/23/17, 11/27/17, 1/22/17, 2/26/17, 3/26/17, 4/23/17 and 5/21/17.

A decision was made to skip the months of August and December.

The half-day retreat was scheduled for 9/16/17 from 9am-1pm to solidify roles and responsibilities and to complete bylaws.

Responsibility for working on bylaws were split up amongst commissioners to do independently or in teams.

Budgeting was discussed. Bonnie will do more research on how and where funds can be kept.

Decision to create individual gmail accounts for each commissioner set up as first initial.last [namehfcswg@gmail.com](mailto:namehfcswg@gmail.com).

Next meeting will include:

- Branding
  - o Business cards
  - o Nametags
  - o Banners
  - o Logo
- Report out on the girls forum and advocacy day
- Update on missing member Anais
- LJ to create email example and signature
- Chelsea to send links to calendars and create facebook page

Chair will take on sending out the meeting announcements for the next three meetings until the retreat occurs.

Certificate of Receipt of Open Meeting Law Materials were provided to clerk to send to Kelley Lynch.



## **Hampshire- Franklin Commission on the Status of Women and Girls**

**May 17th, 2017**

### **5th Annual Statewide gathering on the Status of Girls**

Commissioners Candelario, Sunday Kline and MacCracken attended the 5th Annual Statewide gathering on the Status of Girls in Sturbridge MA, hosted by Investing in Girls Alliance- IIGA.

This year's gathering focused on the collective impact work in the following areas:

- Engaging women's commissions
- Engaging men
- Engaging the next generation of leaders
- New Study by the Girl Scouts Eastern Mass/Simmons College: Dreaming Big – What Confidence Has To Do With It
- How to accomplish this in today's challenging environment

In support of our long term sustainability work, this year participants were encouraged you to bring a current/emerging young leader who is invested in girls and wants the opportunity to learn more.

**May 20th, 2017**

### **Women's Advocacy Day State House**

Six Commissioners of the Hampshire-Franklin Commission on the Status of Women of Girls (HFCSWG) attend MCSW Advocacy Day 2017 on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Their purpose for attending was to stand in support of women and girls of their region and throughout Massachusetts, as well as to support Francina Vieda Wisnewski, Acting Chair of the HFCSWG, who spoke about the reasons for why she pursued becoming a Commissioner as she introduced one of MCSW's priority legislation, An Act Establishing Three New Commissions on the Status of Women and Girls (S. 1119) before those in attendance. Commissioner Wisnewski's statement in support of S. 1119:



## Hampshire- Franklin Commission on the Status of Women and Girls

*" I am honored to be here with all of you. I am a daughter, sister, mother, wife, neighbor and friend; of Montague in Western Mass, immigrant from Colombia and representing the Hampshire Franklin Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.*

*I have experienced firsthand the limitations of living in a rural community, raising a family, at some point, under income, relying on support from the State's system, trying hard to overcome these barriers. Thankfully, I had supports and a village of people that helped my family to be in a better place. this happened in a time in which these service was accessible and available at a critical time in our lives.*

*In my professional world, I have and had great opportunities to interact, support and help women from diverse backgrounds to find their strength and their voices. Franklin County has the high population of poverty in the state, many of my friends, coworkers and neighbors are women struggling to meet ends, living incidences of domestic violence, working hard to find a sense of purpose, to live with dignity and to be role models for their families. Many of these women are single parents, head of household, living in the lower income bracket. Many of these women would like to go back to school and increase their odds in the workforce, but their circumstances don't allow a financial capacity to afford education, safe housing, neither access to quality childcare or basic medical care without the worries of high deductibles or expensive medication or just access to reproductive health. It's easy to be caught in a never ending cycle.*

*As citizens of the commonwealth, it's critical to constantly advocate for women's rights, to visit legislators and ask to keep supporting bills that will made life for women, fair and equitable.*

*Speaker DeLeo quoted the MWPC website: "Currently, just 12 of 40 Massachusetts state senators and just 38 of 160 state representatives are women. Total, just 50 out of 200 state legislators are women, or 25.0%. This means we rank 24th in the country in terms of the percentage of women in state legislature.", He also mentioned that 80% of the leadership in legislation is behind women, this is pretty exciting.*

*I appreciate my fellow commissioner, Bonnie MacCracken's, passion and efforts in establishing our Hampshire-Franklin Commission, that is why I am here before you today, I am paying it forward, so that the women of the Eastern Region, Upper Middlesex, and Plymouth County can benefit from having their voices heard.*

*I am presenting Bill Barber Docket Numbers: S1119 in the Senate and H1110 in the House*

### **An Act Establishing Three New Commissions on the Status of Women and Girls**

*Lead Sponsors: Senator Brady, Senator DeMacedo, Representative Poirier and Representative Barber*

- The Commission supports and is invested in the further establishment of county and regional commissions on the status of women.*
- An Act Establishing Three New Commissions on the Status of Women and Girls would allow further commissions to be created in the same model as the MCSW, and the six existing county and regional commissions.*
- The role of the regional commissions is to review the status of women in the communities and then make recommendations regarding policies and programs that would increase opportunities and equalities.*
- The creation of the Eastern Regional Commission, an Upper Middlesex Commission, and a Plymouth County Commission is consistent with the Commission's goal of increasing women's political participation in the Commonwealth.*

*I am humbled by how our efforts, as commissioners and how our collective voices could impact change for future generation of women in the commonwealth. By encouraging women to participate in their*



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*community, these bills will foster a greater sense of involvement and inspire future generations of women leaders here in MA.”*

The HFCSWG Commissioners divided into several groups and scattered across the State House to lobby their representatives and senators, and other members of the Western Massachusetts delegation, to gain their support of MCSW's priority legislation that is comprised of eight bills. Advocacy Day also allowed the HFCSWG Commissioners the opportunity to begin building a network and forming partnerships with their legislators, their legislators' aides, local advocates from their region, and Commissioners from other regional commissions, especially with Hampden and Berkshire County.

From this experience, HFCSWG Commissioners strengthen their advocacy and lobbying skills to be an effective voice for impacting change for women and girls; learned about available resources and maneuvering the legislative process; and most importantly building their own sisterhood and learning about each other.

### **May 20th, 2017 Semi- annual Regional Commission Meeting Women's Political Caucus Office**

Commissioner Brown, Mack, MacCracken, Sunday Kline, Perreira, Wisnewski attended the Semi- annual Regional Commission Meeting, participating in the following topics:

- Questions regarding the Open Meeting Law, a helpful guide from the Attorney General's office and meetings in general.
- Access to a contact list for the leadership of each regional commission. Networking opportunities with other Commissioners.
- Expressed interest in a dedicated web page hosted by the MCSW's website.

**May 30th, 2017**



## **Hampshire- Franklin Commission on the Status of Women and Girls**

### **OML Training**

Commissioners MacCracken and Wisnewski participated in the Open Meeting Law Regional Training at Holyoke Senior Center, facilitated by the staff from the office of the Massachusetts Attorney General. The goal of the meeting was to promote openness and transparency in government. Information presented included clarification of procedures, diversity of questions and general educational outreach about the law's requirements. "The Open Meeting Law requires that most meetings of public bodies be held in public, and it establishes rules that public bodies must follow in the creation and maintenance of records relating to those meetings".

<http://www.mass.gov/ago/docs/government/oml/oml-guide.pdf>

**Respectfully submitted by Francia Wisnewski, Chair.**